

LAMENTATIONS OF LONDON.

[The L. C. C. Bill for acquiring the undertakings of the Metropolitan Water Companies has been defeated by H. M. Government.]

Whitechapel speaks :

WHEN August with his blazing skies
Beats on the burnt-up town,
When Mayfair packs her trunks and flies
To moor and breezy down ;
When, dense as cattle in a pen,
My children in their slums
Lie sick and panting—then, ah ! then
The water-famine comes !

Fetid and foul the vapours there
That in my alleys seethe,
And poisonous the evil air
My hapless children breathe ;
While down the kennel, through the reek
Of rotting refuse, lo !
Disease, his easy prey to seek,
Stalks grimly to and fro.

Water ! they cry ; the stifling air
For water, water sighs ;
The fainting earth in her despair
For water, water cries ;
All nature, sick wellnigh to death
Beneath the savage sun,
For water calls with her last breath—
But water there is none.

Thrice blest my sister of the north
For whom Loch Katrine pours
Her cool, life-giving treasures forth
In never-ending stores,
Fresh from the snow and mountain tops !
While what is granted me ?
The niggard intermittent drops
From tainted Thames and Lea.

How long, O Parliament, how long
Shall water-lords endure ?
How long shall I behold the strong
Oppress my weak and poor ?
How long till I enjoy the right
My youngest sisters share,
To save my children from the blight
Of poisoned earth and air ?

THE CURSE OF SPRING.

(A story for Parents and Guardians.)

"WHERE is JANE?" asked the father for the second time. This time his manner suggested that the east wind had got into the room.

The mother saw no help for it ; she had tried to protect her daughter's secret.

"JANE is writing in her room," said the mother.

The father wheeled round his chair and looked sternly at his wife.

"Symptoms the same as ALFRED?" he queried.

"Yes," said his wife hurriedly ; "but I think it's only a mild attack, dear, this time. She didn't buy so much foolscap and envelopes as he did."

"Don't let us deceive ourselves," said

the father resolutely. "Remember, a week ago ALFRED began to sicken. Up to that time he was like an ordinary, healthy young man. Then he got restless ; pored over penny magazines, furtively purchased stationery, and finally"—the father's voice broke with emotion—"he asked me if I had a rhyming dictionary. This barely a week ago. And now you tell me that JANE. . . Don't talk of Influenza—this dreadful scribblemania that comes in April is far worse."

"JANE is not so reckless, and she doesn't write poems—only stories."

"Only stories!" shrieked the unhappy father. "Only stories. Wife, do you know I had a sister once who wrote only stories? The horror of those days I shall never forget. Not till the rest of the family compelled her for some weeks to

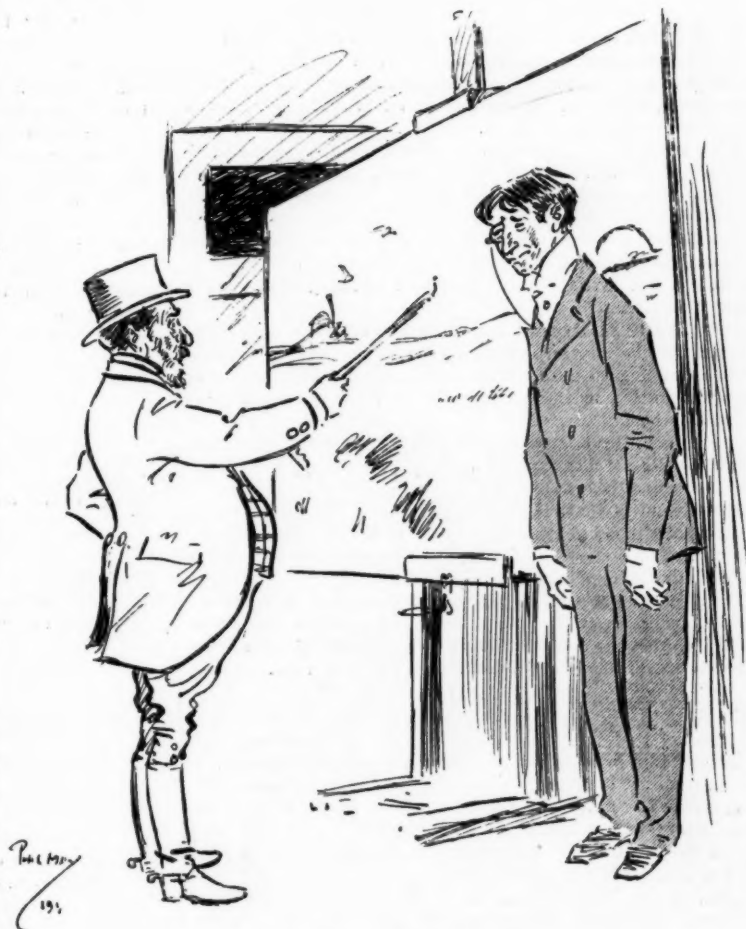
read nothing but her own fiction did the complaint abate. JANE must be placed by herself at once. . . . She is not safe. . . . And if the servants catch it—ah!"

The suggestion told. The housewife wailed in horror, "Oh, I cannot, cannot lose the fifteenth cook I have had in three weeks!"

"Mother," exclaimed fifteen-year-old SYLVIA, bouncing into the room, "I've got some verses in this week's *Scrappings*."

But the mother had fainted away, "To-morrow," said the father with grim resolution, "I'll have you all vaccinated by an experienced journalist, and as you girls are so crazed on print, you shall have nice strongly-marked print dresses for your summer gowns."

In the evening the girls were rapidly approaching convalescence.



AN ART PATRON.

"I'LL HAVE IT IF YOU SHORTEN THE 'ORIZON, AND MAKE IT QUIDS INSTEAD OF GUINEAS!"

ART IN THE DOLLS' HOUSE.

BY LITTLE QUEENIE.

§ 8.—About Mr. Bransawder's Kindness.

I HAVE been so overwhelmed with letters of gratitude and congratulatory about this series that it is simply impossible to reply to them individually, so I must thank my beloved readers here in haste and tell them how *delighted* I feel that these articles have been such a help to them.

They are a great pleasure to me to do, besides being a source of much profit too. Mind, dear readers, that when you are ordering things at Mr. BRANSAWDER'S, 999, Oxford St., with the spotted Rookhorse over the shop (and really and truly it is the only *highclass* toyshop in London) *mind you mention my name*, because, besides being sure of getting something in irreproachable taste, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are *bennyfitting me*.

It is like this: Mr. BRANSAWDER is so pleased with these articles that he wants to encourage me to persevere with them, and he is going to send me a specimen of every novelty he gets for notice in these columns—and I am not to *dreme* of returning them afterwards!

That is not all; he says that in future he is going to allow me what he calls a "*comishun*" on every purchase by a Customer who mentions these articles.

A *comishun* is that, if you purchase a shilling thing on my recommendation, I get a halfpenny out of it; if a two shilling, a penny, and so on—which is why I always advise my readers to buy only the *very best*.

Then Mr. PUNCH pays me for what I write, and altogether a child who desires to be independent and earn her own pocket-money without the humiliation of applying to her parents every time she wants some cannot do better than do as I am.

§ 9.—A Word of Warning.

But do not imagine for a moment that I am advising any of my readers to follow my example. It is not everybody that *could*—perhaps *nobody* but me, though it sounds consoling to say it. Still, it is more difficult than you think. You see, you have got to be *thurally* well educated and accustomed to writing and spelling with perfect ease and accuracy. Then you must possess exquisite taste and judgment and sympathy, and not mind *what* trouble you take.

I am afraid, if you tried, you would only meet with disappointment and failure, and on the whole I cannot recommend any of you, dear children, to take to Literature as a career.

Alas! my beloved readers, events have once more turned out in a manner which I little anticipated!

My dear Papa is one of those superior persons that doesn't read "*Punch*" but only glances at the pictures and says there is nothing in it this week.

However, the fame of his little Queenie's articles penetrated his ears at last, and sending for the back numbers, he eagerly perused the effusions of his beloved daughter.

At first he *rawed* with disrespectful meriment—but by and by he arrived at my honorable mentions of Mr. BRANSAWDER'S shop and he nitted his brows and his laughter died away in expressions which I cannot sully my pen by repeating.

Then he sternly declared that no child of his should receive commissions from tradesmen, though I pointed out to him that Mr. BRANSAWDER was not a common shopman, but a perfect gentleman who had gone into business.

Poor Papa was utterly unable to see that that made any difference, and it was in vain that I urged that if Mr. BRANSAWDER'S toys were the *best* (which they truly are), I was only doing my readers and myself good by recommending them.

But Papa remained as obstinate as any pig and said it was a rotten system and the next thing to bribery and he wouldn't have it, and I wasn't to accept anything out of the shop without

paying cash down for it and he had a good mind to punch poor Mr. BRANSAWDER'S head for his impudence—and things like that!

Well, to avoid unpleasantness, I was obliged to give way—but I can't see why I mayn't take any little presents when Mr. BRANSAWDER so kindly presses them on my acceptance, only it appears the grownups are not in the habit of doing so, and I think it just shows how silly they are!

I sometimes think my poor dear Papa is just a little *Early Victorian* in his way of looking at things, and doesn't recognise that we have entered the *threshold of a New Century*.

But, for the present, I have no option but to obey, and since I cannot conscientiously recommend any goods which do not come out of Mr. BRANSAWDER'S shop, and I am not to be allowed to do it *my own way*, I haven't the heart to continue this series any longer—except, perhaps, to answer a few correspondence who may care to address a line of comfort and sympathy to

Their well-meaning but constantly baffled little friend,
QUEENIE.

FOOD FOR INFANTS.

["At an inquest held at Newington on a baby two months old, it transpired that the mother had been feeding him on oats . . . The coroner remarked that he had had cases where children had been fed on whelks, fried fish and pork chops, and had drunk ale and stout."—*Daily Chronicle*.]

A BABE was born in a Newington slum,

As healthy a babe as may be,

With a round little head and a round little tum,

And a white little tooth in a red little gum,

And a voice that would seldom or never be dumb—

In short, a model baby.

The child was remarkably sturdy and stout,

And, for all one could tell of it, clever.

Of that there is no manner of doubt—

No probable, possible shadow of doubt—

No possible doubt whatever.

Now, babes I am given to understand,

Should live on a simple diet;

But this one was fed on the fat of the land,

Pork chops and pickles and lobster—canned—

With rum, of an inexpensive brand,

And gin to keep it quiet.

Pork chops and whelks, washed down with stout,

Small babies thrive on never.

Of that there is no manner of doubt—

No probable, possible shadow of doubt—

No possible doubt whatever.

Weeks sped, and wan and wasted and worn

Became that infant cherished;

His ounces were fewer than when he was born,

His little inside with pain was torn,

And when they came to his cot one morn,

They found that he had perished.

A taste for gin, combined with stout,

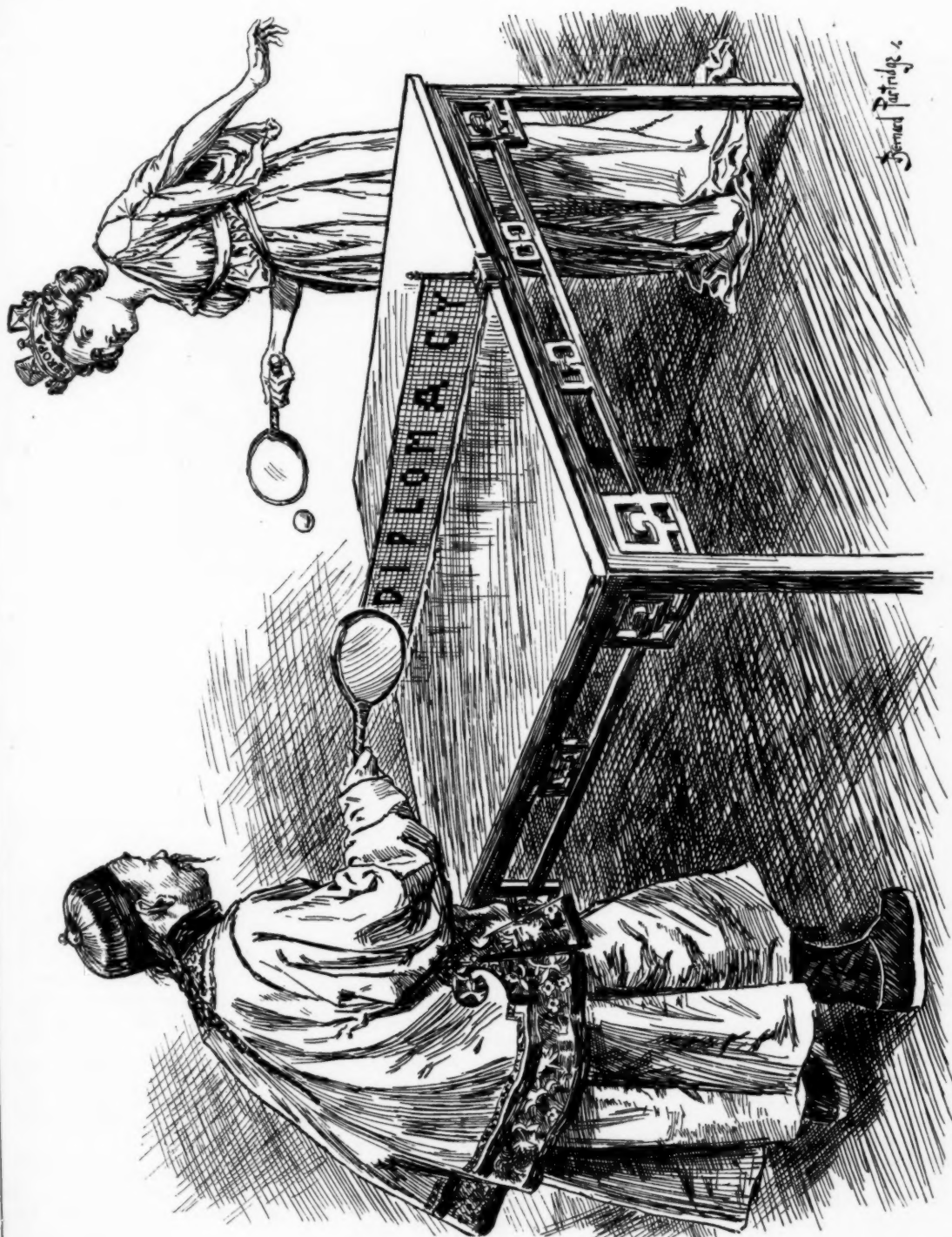
Had doubled him up forever.

Of that there is no manner of doubt—

No probable, possible shadow of doubt—

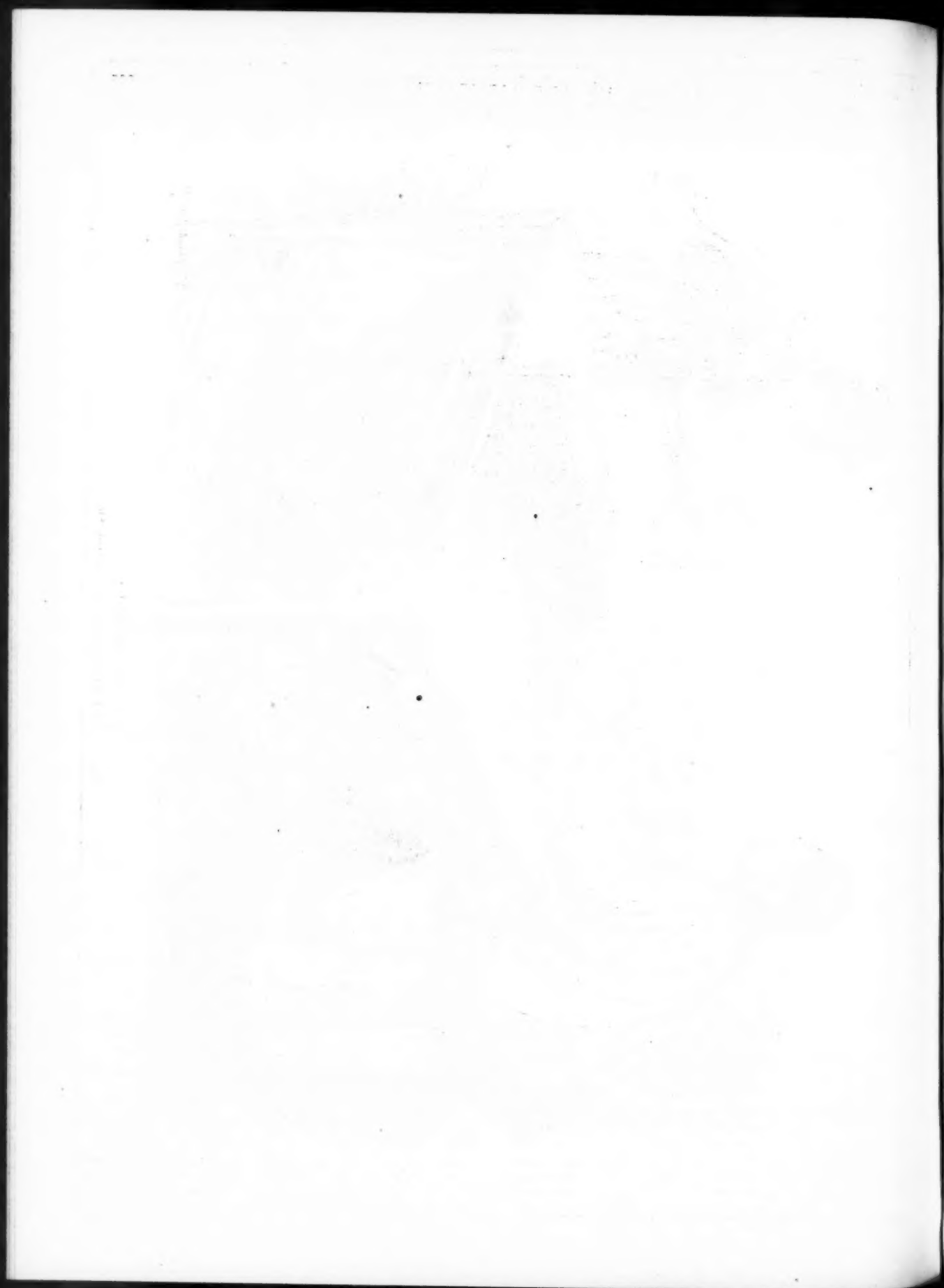
No possible doubt whatever.

"THE CORPORATION AND THE PORT OF LONDON."—A Correspondent signing himself "VERE TOPER," writes—"What's the difficulty? There oughtn't to be any, as the Corporation of the City ought by this time to have all the best port that the City can obtain. They've got the money, they've got the correct taste, they've got the men to drink, and if they haven't the Port by now, why, they never will have."



"PING PONG";
OR, "A GAME THAT HE DOES UNDERSTAND."

James Partridge





Stout Wife. "I SHALL NEVER GET THROUGH HERE, JAMES. IF YOU WERE HALF A MAN, YOU WOULD LIFT ME OVER!"
Husband. "IF YOU WERE HALF A WOMAN, MY DEAR, IT WOULD BE EASIER!"

THE RAIN OF TERROR;

Or, one more Ingredient.

[According to recent reports, rain of a ruby-red colour has fallen in southern Europe. The reports may have been somewhat highly coloured.]

UPON my walks I met a man,
 A happy man, who laughed with glee,
 High, high indeed, his spirits ran;
 A thing I rather like to see.

I touched him quietly on the sleeve,
 "My dear good friend," I gently said,
 "My curiosity relieve,
 And tell me who you are." Instead

Of answering my small behest
 He looked me curiously o'er,
 Then thumped me soundly on the chest—
 A kind of greeting I abhor;

And then he bawled into my ear
 (I swear his lungs were made of leather),
 "I am the clerk, the overseer,
 Of that most talked of thing—the
 weather.

"I send the rain, I sprinkle snow,
 I portion out with sparing hand
 The azure sky with sunset glow,
 And when I'm glum befog the land.

"The raw material of weather
 I deal with as it comes to hand.
 I do not send it all together,
 But vary it, you understand.

"I give you, say, a pinch of snow,
 A touch of fog, a heavy dew,
 And over all a gale I blow;
 A kind of atmospheric stew.

"I sometimes add a little frost
 In penetrating mists dissolved,
 Or hail—I never count the cost.
 Variety, I am resolved,

"The spice of life is. Now, old boy,
 To you I will at once explain
 The reason of my boundless joy;
 I'm going to get some ruby rain!

"One more ingredient! Hooray!
 I'll send you April showers of fire.
 Throughout the City every day
 The streets shall flow with crimson mire.

"A carmine snow-storm, think of that!
 A poppy-mist before a blizzard,
 And all the ladies crying, 'Drat
 That ready-witted weather wizard!'"

He laughed aloud and sped away,
 That clerkly demon of the weather.
 I stood there to surprise a prey;
 You might have felled me with a feather.

A MORBID REFLECTION.

[A scientific Journal explains that the peculiar aroma of choice Havana cigars arises from the presence of certain bacteria in the leaf.]

RICH, redolent cigar,
 The peacefulness to mar
 That lulls me to enjoyment, calm and
 Come analysts unkind, [sleepy,
 That in you bid me find
 A horrid swarm of creatures small and
 creepy.

Uneasily I smoke,
 While sadly (or in joke)
 The crop of dismal horrors they're
 describing;

Though at their proofs I winced,
 I'm only half convinced,
 As your delicious perfumes I'm imbibing.

But when your stump goes out,
 I overcome my doubt,
 And from my troubled fancy I despatch it
 With this profound reflection—
 That, if it is infection,
 I only wish my Cavendish would catch it.

NEW SETTING OF AN OLD OPERATIC AIR
 (as sung by the Officers mentioned in the
 despatches of the Commander-in-Chief).—
 "ROBERTS, Toi que j'aime!"

THE BOOK OF BEAUTY.

A GREAT THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

SECOND SERIES.

IV.—THE "BRIDGE" SECTION.

APRIL 1ST.—Bridge is a well-known parlour-game that may be played after dinner by ladies and gentlemen indifferently (this is especially true of ladies). It is also played in clubs; thus distinguishing itself from "Ping-pong."

2ND.—Bridge is understood to have originated in Thibet, where it has long been a sacred requisite of the Grand Slama.

3RD.—The derivation of the word Bridge is explained as follows:—When the game was introduced into Europe by Oriental scholars, the Latin equivalent for Grand Slama was found to be *Pontifex Maximus*. Now, a *pontifex* is etymologically one who performs rites (*facio*) on a bridge (*pons*). Bridge, therefore, may be said to be associated with the idea of sacrificial victims, a view which is daily growing in favour among the less fortunate exponents of the game. It is only fair, however, to say that another theory, connecting it with *pons asinorum*, has received the approval of many experts.

4TH.—The cause of the supplanting of Whist by Bridge is at least twofold. (1) Under a thin resemblance to a game hallowed by traditions of sobriety and respectability, it has insidiously introduced a chartered form of gambling (with its attendant debauchery) into the most rigid haunts of virtue. (2) Unlike Whist (an onomatopoeic word implying the necessity for silence; cf. *hush*!) the game of Bridge encourages polite conversation among the players, in this way affording a much-needed relief to the tension of the mind.

5TH.—It might be imagined that the device of a compulsory dummy would tend to modify the above-mentioned licence; but experience has proved that the dummy talks as loud as any active player during the progress of a hand, and very much louder immediately after.

6TH.—Abuse of the privilege of cursive comment has led in some clubs to the overt classification of Bridge under the head of Games of Hazard (such as *Euchre*, *Pharaoh*, and *Loo*); in some to the revival of the duello; in some (but these cases are as rare as they are deplorable) to the introduction of the police.

7TH.—During a dispute between your adversaries on the subject of the preceding (or even the current) hand, circumstances and knowledge of character must decide for you whether you should take sides in the discussion. If language of actual contumely is hurtling in the air, then it is as well to let confusion do its dreadful work without interruption.

8TH.—If, however, the debate is friendly and on abstract lines, each of your opponents giving expression to a modest belief in the impregnability of his position, then it is a good rule for you and your partner to throw your united weight on one or other side; thus establishing diffidence in the one, and an overweening confidence in the other.

9TH.—It is further an excellent practice to argue stoutly in support of a gross mistake committed by the weaker of your adversaries, that so he may be encouraged to repeat it.

10TH.—You should always give a courteous welcome to an elementary player who proposes to join your table: for it must never be forgotten that your chances of making something out of him are precisely as two to one.

11TH.—Dummy is not supposed to call attention to his partner's revoke (if it escapes remark) till after the cards have been cut for the ensuing deal. Then he is free to offer congratulations and suitable pleasantries. But if attention is called to the revoke at the time by the adversaries, then dummy is at liberty to say at once whatever occurs to him.

12TH.—Choice of seats (apart from superstition) may be of more importance than is commonly supposed. The idea of taking into account the position of mirrors in a room may be

discarded as ungentlemanlike; but the effect of a legitimate draught on the back of an opponent already afflicted with a sorry rheum has been worked out by statisticians as equivalent to fourteen points in every third rubber.

13TH.—Honours in Bridge, as in Whist, have [no connection with merit; a fact to which we may partially attribute the celerity with which politicians have familiarised themselves with this game.

14TH.—The absence of pockets in ladies' evening-gowns is a fruitful source of Bad Debts.

15TH.—It has been nicely computed that the relative values of skill in Bridge and in Whist are as fifteen to four. Consequently, a Government official, devoting to Bridge the same proportion of his limited leisure as he used to devote to Whist, is now enabled to lose £98 10s. 0d. *per annum* of his hard-earned income, where he was accustomed to lose only £26 5s. 4d. This will not, however, prevent him from describing Bridge as a game in which pure chance predominates.

(To be continued.)

O. S.

THAT DREADFUL GAME; OR, THE TORTURE OF TOMKINS.

ABOUT a fortnight ago I went to dine with the ROBINSONS. It was an excellent dinner, as all their dinners are, and not too long, which leaves time for music or cards afterwards. Like many easy-going men who have passed the first bloom of youth, I find that suits me perfectly. To listen to music involves no exertion whatever; to play cards one is at all events seated; even for pool or billiards one has only to stand and stroll about. Some dreadfully energetic men I know always say, "What a lazy beggar TOMKINS is!" But I don't care.

When we had finished dinner at the ROBINSONS' that evening, the men were invited to go and smoke in another room. I thought nothing of that. I imagined that the dining-room had to be cleared, so that early the next morning it might be painted, or whitewashed, or undergo some such decoration not unusual in spring. So I smoked peacefully in the other room with the other fellows; and then we went into the drawing-room. No sooner had we entered the door than the young ladies of the family jumped up and cried joyfully, "Ping Pong!"

"What's that?" said I.

"Not know Ping Pong, Mr. TOMKINS?" they asked, derisively.

"I'm not much good at games," I confessed humbly. "Of course I've heard it spoken of, but how do you play it?"

"Come and see," they replied; "it's as easy as possible. You'll learn directly. It's such a jolly game. We play every evening."

I abandoned all hope of peaceful music. One of the girls sings very nicely, and another plays the piano, but, of course, no girl would do anything so effeminate if there were a chance of jumping about with a racquet and a ball. I felt sure it must be something of the sort, and I was right.

The whole of that deplorable evening was devoted to that "jolly game." They stood me at one end of the dining-table, put a battledore, a beastly baby's battledore into my hand, and made me aim at a beastly little ball that bounded up from what some writers call "the festive board." At first I couldn't hit the thing at all. Then I gave it tremendous whacks, and it flew up to the ceiling, or hit the pictures, or got mixed up with the electric light. But wherever it went it always finished on the floor, and I spent half the time crawling under the table, or hitting my head against the sideboard, or grovelling under the chairs, or lifting up the coal scuttle. However, several times I hit the silly ball in the right direction, and the girls said I was "getting on splendidly," when all I was anxious for was getting off.

At last they let me go, and I sat at the side of the room with various admirers of the ghastly game, and, like them—though in my case from politeness rather than interest—followed the

movements of the ball, our heads wagging solemnly from side to side exactly like the head of the old gentleman at Madame TUSSAUD'S. This gave me such a crick in my neck that I was glad, as an excuse for no longer looking on, to start fielding for the girls. Even after dinner, it is less uncomfortable to crawl about the floor on one's hands and knees than to "sit a while," and wag one's head, and roll one's eyes, and twist one's neck, till they all ache together, listening meanwhile to the horrid, monotonous thuds on the beastly battledores, a sound which the enthusiasts seem positively to enjoy.

Then they made me have another turn with the battledore, and complimented me still more on my vast progress. But I bore it meekly, for after that the party broke up. I have since understood that this was unusual, as many intelligent persons go on till breakfast time.

A few days ago I heard from some mutual friends that the ROBINSON girls had been making fun of me everywhere, and saying, "Why, Mr. TOMKINS couldn't even hit the ball!" Well, I never wanted to hit it. But it was a very unkind criticism, after I had spent a whole evening crawling among the furniture to please them.

Now I think of patenting a new game to be called "Progressive Ping Pong." Instead of playing in one room only, which seems feeble, you put a long table in every possible part of the house, and put all the rest of your furniture in the garden, or the kitchen, or pile it up in the cellars. I may mention, incidentally, that if you live in a flat you can't play my game at all. Besides, if you tried to, you would be murdered by the other tenants, and it would serve you jolly well right. Well, when you've cleared your house, people play my game in every room, and move on, as in Progressive Whist. Those who have reached the ground floor begin again in the attics. So they need never stop. You needn't give them any supper; their enthusiasm is too great for such interruptions; a lemon-squash on the staircase is the most they could want. Of course, the prize for the winner would be a gold-mounted battledore with little gold screws, as on a kettle-drum, to tune the parchment to the exact note of "ping" or "pong" which he or she might prefer. I hope the game will not go out of fashion before I can introduce my improvement.

CURIOUS CRICKET QUERY.—Has "throwing" been "chucked?"

THE FIRST AUTHOR OF A PROBLEM PLAY.
—EUCLID.



He. "I CAN'T UNDERSTAND PHYLLIS REJECTING ME LAST NIGHT."

She. "NEVER MIND. YOU'LL SOON GET OVER IT."

He. "OH, I'VE GOT OVER IT RIGHT ENOUGH; BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING SO DOOSID SORRY FOR HER. I SHAN'T ASK HER AGAIN!"

A CHANCE FOR SIR MICHAEL.

["A friend of mine once, at an 'At Home,' got into conversation with one of the most successful of West End professors of palmistry. He had lately retired from the business, after making for several years, it was said, something like £5,000 each year."—*Free Lance*, April 20.]

HERE'S a subject for Taxation
Straight out of hand indeed!
Here's the revenue you need
That waits for exploitation.

Many littles make a mickle
(Or MICHAEL) says the saw;
These breakers of the law
Your fancy well might tickle.

Your close attention focus
On thriving West-End seers
Who've made, these latter years,
A boom in hocus-pocus.

Just think—here's one confesses
He's earned (?) this easy way
More than a Bishop's pay,
By chiromantic guesses!

They flout with gay bravado
The gullible police,
And in the fools they fleece
Is found an Eldorado.

They bear the palm for palming
Sham "science" off for true;
Hysteric "clients," too,
Require a little calming!

So tax without compassion
To the tune of cent. per cent.
For every guinea spent
Upon the Quacks of Fashion!

UNEXPECTED INTERVIEWS.

THE BITER BIT.

GOOD morning, Mr. WHITE. Congratulate you; wonderful success—er—your book, of course. Everyone's talking of it. Mistake? Oh, no; I'm from the *Epoch*, you know. Anyone else been? No one from the *Argus*? Capital! But they're a slow lot. Well, we flatter ourselves—don't do to waste time, does it? The public likes its news served hot—and strong—the stronger the better. Stupid ass, the public, but it likes to know, you know.

Ah, let me see. Your first interview? Better and better. Not the last though, or I'll—I'll eat the *Argus*. But after your success—pretty clock, that. Any story? No? Oh, don't apologise—not your fault. Alarum, I see: *Orthro-phoito*—pardon the Greek tag—besides, the rest doesn't apply, we'll hope—but you do rise early, I presume? Eight, seven, six? That's all right. The earlier the better for the public, as long as they don't have to do it themselves. Er—might I see your bedroom? Oh, I see, yes—camp-bedstead. Cold tub, I suppose. Yes, and then—work before breakfast? Oh, no work before breakfast? That's bad. Ah, *BLAKELEY'S Exerciser*, I see; that's better. May I feel your arm? Use it myself generally at the beginning of the year. Time for good resolutions, isn't it? Difficult to keep up though. Five days is my record. We'll call it *STRONG'S*, if you don't mind; it'll fit in better. Something of this sort:—"a biceps which would do credit to *SANDOW* himself, whose *Exerciser* occupies a prominent position in"—yes, that runs pretty well.

Thanks, no; no time for smoking. Now then, after the *Exerciser*,—you don't run round the Park now, for instance? You see, I want to work the Spartan note for all it's worth. No? Or break the ice on the *Serpentine*? Ah, you row on it, do you? Yes, that's good. Anyone else there at that time of day? I see—wild fowl and peacocks. Yes, I could bring in the peacocks,—and the hum of distant London, yes, and the *Liver Brigade* in the Row by way of contrast. *Rus in urbe*: that sort of thing: that will be quite effective.

Well, then we come to breakfast. Pity you have it so early, by-the-way. You see my notion was to catch you at it,—get the local colour. My dear fellow, I'm sure you would, if you'd known. Obliging isn't the word—yes, it is though, by Jove! How would this do?—"Nothing could be more obliging than the courtesy with which Mr. WHITE"—Yes, I like that. Well, we must just do the best we can from stock. Let's see—"The rising Author had just finished breakfast when I arrived at the unholy hour of 8.15. I had been warned" (wish I had) "that I must be a very early bird to catch this particular"—m, yes. There, of course, I shall bring in the Spartan simplicity, *SANDOW*, *Serpentine*, and so on—"the secret of your success," you know. Yes, I begin to see my way. "The debris of his frugal meal"—you eat porridge? Capital: it ought to be porridge. Couldn't do without porridge—and perhaps an egg. Yes, you might have a couple of eggs, I think—"as he sat there, watching the blue smoke curl upwards from his briar-pipe"—yes, I see it's a *meerschau*,—"from his battered old briar, looking every inch an Englishman, broad-shouldered, curly-haired, blue-eyed"—Not blue? Ah, that's a pity. Oh, well—not at all, my dear fellow; nature's fault, not yours. We must do the best we can with grey. Let's see—Oh, yes—"with the deep grey eyes of the habitual thinker, betraying a steady, earnest purpose, it was hard to imagine that this was the man at whose humour the whole world is"—it wouldn't be a bad thing, by the way, if you could manage to say something funny—"one of Mr. WHITE's happy remarks" you know, "which we cannot refrain from placing before the readers of the *Epoch*." Won't it come? Oh, well, never mind. I'll see what I can do when I get home.

Now about your work. Done anything before? I don't seem

to remember—oh, anonymous. Well, if you'll take my advice, you won't do any more unsigned work; it don't pay. Must have your name on the bookstalls. Still, I can shove in something about only equalled by your modesty. Yes, that wouldn't be bad. Got anything else on the stocks? Not yet?—H'm—"Mr. WHITE doesn't believe in the modern mercenary method of beginning a new story before the ink"—m!—"while his last book is still smoking hot from the press. He considers that the inevitable result of making haste to get rich is unfinished and unworthy work." You don't mind my saying that, do you? It's true enough, you know. Why, look at—well, look at the railway bookstalls.

Enough! My dear sir, we've hardly begun. Father alive? That's his photograph, I suppose. "M—ah,—remarkable face, vividly recalling the rugged features of the Sage of Cheyne Walk." Then about your mother. Rather not? By all means. We always respect these little prejudices, though—well, about yourself, then. No children, I suppose? Or dog—haven't you a fox-terrier? Pity, that. Both useful properties. Nuisance in real life, but excellent copy. However—how would this do? "Mr. White is at present prevented by the incessant nature of his work from indulging his strong passion for children and animals. No fairy footsteps on the stairs, no cheerful barking to enliven his solitary hours. His motto is"—that'll do. Trifle poetical, perhaps. Still it's—no, it's not bad.

Now then for some youthful reminiscences. Oh, but, my dear fellow, you must have. Weren't you at school? Well, then—top of your class? No? Excellent. "Far from being an infant prodigy, our author was looked upon as an incorrigible dunce. Nothing but sheer dogged perseverance"—we mustn't make you too grim, though. Didn't you ever play tricks on the master? Caricatures, now, or verses? No? Well, let's see, I'm not much of a poet, still I think I could—what was his name? Briggs?—m!—figs, wigs, pigs. It'll have to be personal, of course. I have it; capital B. Small man? Ah, can't be helped. Listen to this: "How doth the little busy B. delight to"—he smoked, I suppose? "Delight to smoke and smite! He smites our somethings"—no, can't say that: "He caneth gaily all the day, and smoketh half the night." That'll do—see? You wrote 'em, and then—yes, after he'd—no, before he licked you, he said, "Mark my words, Tommy"—your name is Thomas, I think? "Tommy White will be a famous writer some day. But—" Not at all, make you a handsome present of it. It'll go down to posterity like the versatile-young-dog tale about *MILLAR*, and all the rest of 'em. Such is fame—what?

Then we ought to have your views on something. Doesn't much matter what. Got any to speak of? Women's wrongs, now, or—No? Well, it is a bit played out. Still we might suggest—how about this?—"Asked whether he held decided views on the Woman Question, Mr. WHITE said with a sigh that he didn't know the answer. Pressed for a more definite reply, his eyes lit up with a fire which I had not before observed, and his pipe went out in its—no—his excitement. Tall, strong, blue—no, grey-eyed, he stood with his back"—and so on. Then you might say something. "You remember," said Mr. WHITE, "the familiar quotation, 'common are to either sex *artifex* and *opifex*'?" "Yes," I murmured, "and likewise '*caro, carnis* is the same.'" "Well," continued the brilliant young author—"haven't called you that before, have I?"—"brilliant young author, taking no notice of my irrelevant interruption—"there you have the Woman Question in a nutshell. The poet, of course, meant that all the arts and all the professions were open—must be open—to those of both sexes." "Let 'em all come," I suggested with a nervous chuckle. "Let 'em all come," he replied, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, as he relit his trusty pipe." Well, what d'you think of that for an impromptu? I'm getting into my stride at last.

Hallo, look at the time. I must be off. Well, many thanks for the able way in which you've seconded my poor efforts to

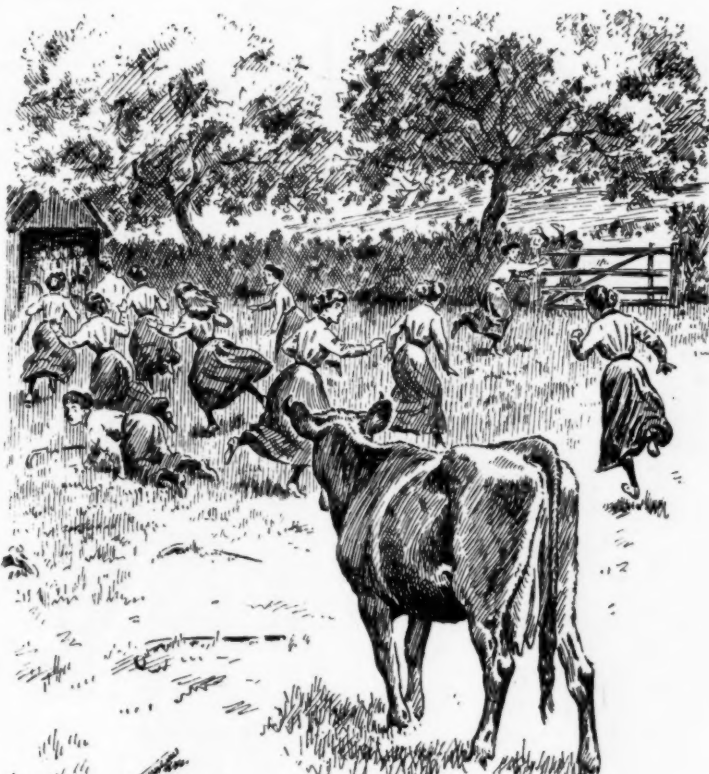
provide the British Lion with his daily garbage—Not at all, my dear fellow. You've done your best. Anyway, you've helped me to score off the *Argus*. Er, what? Oh, yes, as you say, distinctly funny, isn't it? They're a precious slow lot. Er,—you haven't got a photograph of yourself handy? Would you mind signing it? The public—pardon me, but isn't there something wrong? THOMAS WRIGHT, I see you've put. We'd better stick to WHITE. *Nom de plume*, no doubt, but people wouldn't—what? Do you mean to say you're not WHITE?—not the man I—? Well, really, Mr.—er—WRIGHT, why the—why the dickens couldn't you—why did you say you were? Why did you—well, no, come to think of it, I suppose you didn't. I did the talking. But, still, what the—may I ask what your object was? I don't suppose you—Copy? Oh, my beloved Aunt. Copy! He's a journalist! What paper? Not—not—don't say you're an *Argus* man. Oh, Lord, the *Argus*! He interviews for the *Argus*. Well, of all the blamed—Oh, I say, look here, I'm off. You've scooped the pool this time. Would you mind touching the bell? Thanks. I'm going to interview that—that slavey of yours on my way down.

G. F. C.

THE NEW ROAD.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—It is very beautiful to witness the making of a brand-new road—I mean in the suburbs, where the red-brick builder is putting up his houses and tenements. When those concerned commence operations they chop down all the old trees, which are older than Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN or Mr. JOHN BURNS, or for that matter Sir WILLIAM THISELTON-DYER, Autocrat of Kew Gardens, who is also a feller of great intent. When the road-makers have assassinated all the trees they throw vast quantities of Aberdeen granite gravel and water over the thoroughfare, which is, indeed, no thoroughfare, because it leads into a combined brickfield and stone-yard. For many, many days, the dwellers in the fresh and watery dwellings crunch their corns over the rubble and bark their shins on casual timber. On dark nights there are no gas-lamps in order, they fall into moist and perilous cavities arranged on the sidewalks like the ambuscades of the Boer generals. What are those cavities? They are the holes which the excellent authorities have dug for planting new trees, having cut down, as before mentioned, all the ancient growth. In a century we shall have a miniature boulevard.

The Aberdeen granite, &c., having been converted into a state of slush is then severely sat upon, torn about, and generally ill-used by an instrument known as



"OUR GREAT HOCKEY MATCH WAS IN FULL SWING, WHEN A HORRID COW, FROM THE ADJOINING MEADOW, STROLLED ON THE GROUND. PLAY WAS BY GENERAL CONSENT POSTPONED."

the Steam Roller, bearing, as a rule, the White Horse of Kent on its portly bosom. There is no reason to believe but that, conducted on certain principles, the Steam Roller would be a great advantage to the civilisation of the metropolis and its immediate surroundings. It might, for instance, effectually curb the impetus of the misguided railway vans and carrying trollies, which roam our streets without let or hindrance. It might also wake up some of our police-constables at crossings, and clear the way for the traffic disturbed by telephonic wire layers, but as the main factor in a new street it is disappointing and a demoniac nuisance.

It may be the fault of the Aberdeen granite (N.B., Aberdeen granite must always be distinguished, like Doncaster butter scotch, Everton toffee, Bath chaps,

or Stilton cheeses), or the gravel or the water, but the cruel sound of this modern Car of Juggernaut suggests the annihilation of the broadway over which it lumbers from early morning till dewy eve, like a County Council Elephant of the Pleiocene age. There is only one pleasing personage connected with this Colossus of roads, and he is the veteran armed with a Communist flag of deep red, who walks a few yards in front of a monster whose snorting can be heard for miles. He is such a delightful creature of fiction, that in this age of realism we look upon him with joy. Even the horses give their customary laugh when they see his banner of freedom to the new road. He is so simply lovely because he is so perfectly useless.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIDORA PHLATMAN.

Novelty Avenue, S.W.



Old Boy (revisiting school). "WELL, JOCK, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF CHANGES IN THE OLD PLACE SINCE MY TIME."

School Porter. "YESSIE, THE HEAD MASTER IS CHANGED, THE ASSISTANT MASTERS IS CHANGED, THE CHAPEL IS CHANGED, AN' THE TUCK SHOP IS CHANGED; BUT, BLESS YOU, THE BOYS IS JUST THE SAME AS EVER!"

IN VINO VERITAS.

PLACE—Coffee-room of a fashionable hotel.

TIME—The near future. Customer and Waiter discovered.

Customer. Let me see your wine list (Receives it) Ah, you have several brands of champagne—but can you swear to them?

Waiter (hesitating). You have full information in the book, Sir.

Customer. Yes, but that is insufficient. According to the newspapers, the brand may be deceptive. (Regarding him sternly) Although I don't know you, if you like to get a Commissioner and make a sworn information I might believe you. (With increased severity) Of course, if you made

a false statement you would run the chance of prosecution for perjury.

Waiter (trembling). Very sorry, Sir, but the charge is not considered either in my wages or in my tips.

Customer. Well, how about the red wine?

Waiter. We have got Beaune and St. Julien, and if you like a change of colour Niersteiner and Zeltringer.

Customer (kindly, but firmly). My good friend, if you had studied the correspondence in the public press as I have, you would know that the names you have mentioned suggest "liquid generally bad." How about your mineral waters?

Waiter. The names are on the list, Sir.

Customer. So I see. (After consideration) And now have you a good filter—a really good filter?

Waiter. Certainly, Sir, Customer (decisively). Then I will take a glass—of water!

(Curtain.)

"PING PONG."

(A Ditty for the Dining-room.)

[Most manly sports have, at one time or other, had their praises sung by poetic devotees. Why should not the prevailing pastime of "Ping Pong" be also immortalised in verse, especially as the papers have suggested that the Universities should compete in the game?]

I WILL not laud the football or
The gentlemen who kick it;
Nor ask your kind attention for
Some eulogy on cricket.
Though golf and hockey long ago
Created a sensation,
Old England's sons and daughters know
A finer recreation.

It's oh, for the bounding celluloid!
Oh, for the six-inch net!

No one denies
There is exercise

In a fiercely fought out "set."
Oh, for the rally that's much enjoyed,
Oh, for the tuneful song,
When the racquets sing,
With a pong and a ping,
And a ping, ping, pong!

And who would bike or ride or row,
Since anyone is able
To keep on rushing to and fro
About the dining-table.

The sweat from off your forehead falls
When mighty is the tussle;
And merely picking up the balls
Develops ev'ry muscle.

It's oh, for the serve that's hard and
Oh, for the wily twist! [fast!

Oh, for the scores
From the battledores,

When the strokes are seldom
missed.

Oh, for the balls that crack at last,
Though they are fairly strong;
You'll send them wide
If you never have tried

To play ping, ping, pong!

For those of us whose blood is blue
The time it quickly passes;

It also gives enjoyment to
The humbler middle classes.

We bolt our meals, it must be feared,
So eager is our longing
To get the table quickly cleared
And start once more "ping-ponging."

It's oh, for the polished table-tops,
Losing their pristine bloom;

Players don't care
For the wear and tear

In the average dining-room.

Oh, for a game that seldom stops,
Probably we, ere long

Shall hie with despatch
To the 'Varsity match

Of this ping, ping, pong! P. G.



“PAY! PAY! PAY!”

MASTER JOHN BULL. “I’VE PUT A LOT OF PENNIES INTO THIS MACHINE, AND I HAVEN’T GOT ANYTHING OUT. BUT ”—(with determination)—“I’M GOING ON TILL I DO!”

[In consequence of the South African War expenditure, Master JOHN BULL has to meet a deficit of fifty-five millions.]



ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Thursday, April 18.
—Back to work after Easter Holidays.
House thronged in anticipation of big

Wily SQUIRE got J. M. to publicly announce engagement by letter circulated in gaping press. For a while all went well. The two hermits sat side by side in the selected cell, thanking Heaven that they were not even as CAWMELL-BANNERMAN.



Sir Malvolio Hicks Beach. "I SAY THIS HOUSE IS AS DARK AS IGNORANCE; . . . AND I SAY THERE NEVER WAS A MAN THUS ABUSED!"

"BUDGET NIGHT; OR, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!"—*Sh-ksp-re.*

(With apologies to C. Buchel.)

Budget. JOHN MORLEY, in prim seclusion at Gangway end of Front Opposition Bench, from time to time glances with shy nervousness at SQUIRE OF MALWOOD, sitting far down the bench, shoulder to shoulder with CAWMELL - BANNERMAN, facing brass-bound box as if he were again Leader of the Opposition.

How long is it since the SQUIRE approached J. M., warbling "Come, live with me and be my love?" Trustful, thinking no evil, consent was shyly given.

'Tis the old sad story. Soon the lusty SQUIRE found retirement palling upon him; the austere serenity of the joint establishment chilled his marrow; he began to come home late to tea; presently stayed out all night; now has openly abandoned the domestic hearth, returning to earlier courses and old companions.

Customary after Budget Speech for Leader of Opposition to say a few words of general character, his colleague, predecessor of the CHANCELLOR OF THE

EXCHEQUER of the day, reserving to later date critical examination of Budget proposals. To-night the elder partner of the domestic ménage at Gangway end of the bench, brushing Leader of Opposition aside, rose and in trenchant speech denounced a Ministerial policy "that finds its natural expression in the most disastrous financial statement that has ever been made by a CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER."

Business done.—Budget brought in by Sir MICHAEL MALVOLIO HICKS - BEACH, Steward to the State. Shows expenditure on war exceeding £150,000,000 sterling; deficit to be faced this year, £53,207,000.

Friday Night.—Dull night at T. R. Westminster. Went over with SON AND HEIR to Her Majesty's to see *Twelfth Night*. A peerless comedy, delightfully played. LIONEL BROUGH's *Sir Toby Belch*, NORMAN FORBES's *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* never better done. A boozy couple, the triumph of their art is, they in their cups inspire no feeling of disgust. COURTICE POUNDS a revelation as a clown. SARK remembers him slim and blushing tenor making *début* at Savoy. Behold him to-night a plump comedian, full of rollicking humour, singing charmingly withal.

Quite at home with Antonio. Know him well at our own little theatre by Westminster Bridge. He's JOHN BURNS to a B(attersea). True, never saw JOHN wearing earrings; but, then, I never met him on a Sunday. Otherwise, the very man in height, build, face, gestures, voice and intonation. In Scene III., Act 4, the police are called in to remove Antonio for earlier offence of obstruction (just like our House, you see). When he squared his shoulders and roared "Let me speak a little," I quite expected to hear some reference to the London Water Bill, or a few remarks about the Select Committee that threw out the Bill transferring River Steamers to London County Council.

BEERBOHM TREE crowns the success of his staging, the triumph of his getting together such a company, by his rendering of Malvolio. With many subtle touches he presents the living man. One little thing: when the clown is prominently to the front in conversation with Olivia, the way the fussy, vain, pompous steward, touches him with his wand of office, in indescribable manner indicating possession and authority over some meaner thing, is a rarely devised bit of bye-play.

SON AND HEIR mostly struck by passage in Scene V., Act 1, where Viola comes to Olivia as emissary of the Duke Orsino.

Olivia. Whence came you, Sir?

Viola. I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part.

"Gad," said SON AND HEIR, "what a fellow this SHAKESPEARE is! Foresaw

everything; has a word for every part. You know, TONY mine, what I nightly suffer at the House, when, having read out from MS. the answer supplied at the F. O. to particular Question on the paper, BASHMEAD-ARTLETT or TOMMY BOWLES puts Supplementary Question and I decline to answer. As I told one of them in my first week as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, COUSIN ARTHUR forbade me to reply to Supplementary Questions. Regular row; adjournment of House moved; a whole sitting taken up with jawing about the business. And here's SHAKSPEARE writing in the spacious times when our family was well to the front—though, I admit, not so numerously represented as to-day in the Government—writing the very thing. 'I can say very little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part.' Wish I'd thought of that when they first tackled me. Shall learn it off; have it ready next time BASHMEAD or the CAP'EN assail me with Supplementary Questions."

Business done.—The MARKISS, basking in the sun at Beaulieu, little knows how narrowly the KING has escaped necessity of sending for BRYN ROBERTS. Crisis arose in Committee of Ways and Means. BRYN making few observations on Coal Tax observed no one to listen to him on Treasury Bench. Not a single Minister present. BRYN's Welsh blood up. Moved to report progress. Consternation in Ministerial camp. Whips taken by surprise. Could they bring up sufficient men to avoid ignominious defeat of Government? A quarter of an hour's anxiety. Result, pulled through with majority of 44. Evidently the worst do for Ministry whose nominal majority is nearly a hundred more.

CONVERSATIONAL HINTS FOR YOUNG RIDERS.

CHAPTER XIII.

The End of the Season.

ANOTHER season has come to an end. It has, so to speak, run to earth, and these notes, like pursuing hounds who reach the quarry's hiding-place after an interval, must be regretfully gathered together and taken home. The hounds will reappear in all their bravery next autumn—but the notes have done their work, and are to be kennelled for good.

It has been a good season, well protracted owing to the backwardness of spring, and horses and hounds have had their full share of honest work. Frost, the enemy of all good hunting men, has troubled us but little. Do you remember, years and years ago, when the first flush of a hardy youth was still yours, when your limbs were springy, and your spirits keen, and your eyes clear, and your hair still grew close and thick about your temples, in those far-off delightful days when nothing seemed to tire you, and when the harder you rode the more warmly you glowed with the ardour of the run—do you remember, I say, how waking in the early morning you blundered across your bedroom to the window, drew the blind, opened the window, felt the frost in your face, and realised with a bitter disappointment that this day, to which you had been looking forward, was doomed to be a wasted day? However, you were not going to be defeated without a struggle: you shaved—ugh! how the razor scrapes when the mercury has fallen below 32—you induced your leather breeches, fought apoplectically with the button-hook, lugged on, even more apoplectically, your top-boots, felt the buttons of your breeches pressed deep into your tender leg, but bore the pain uncomplainingly; tied your beautiful tie neatly and with despatch; and then, shining with health and the exertion of dressing, proceeded to breakfast. Was there any hope of the sun breaking through in strength sufficient to make hunting possible? Was the wind about to veer and bring a spurt of rain? Was it possible that six miles off, at the "Three Tuns," where hounds were to meet, there might have been no frost at all? These mitigations of despair chased one another through your mind as you ate your appointed way through the fried sole, the kidneys and bacon, the poached eggs, and the concluding marmalade.

"Any good, TOM?" you said to the faithful stableman not long afterwards in the stable.

"Well, Sir, it don't look very cheerful, that's certain; but, Lor', you never knows your luck. Of course they mayn't bring hounds out, but then again they may—and if it 's anyhow possible they 'll have a go. Yes, Sir, I'll have him ready in a minute."

And then, varying between hopes and fears, you rode to the meet—only to find half-a-dozen enthusiasts like yourself, but no hounds, and no prospect of them. It was a cruel blow, but the justice of the decision was undeniable, for no man of sense would have imperilled his horse's legs and his own valuable bones over those iron-bound fields. Yes, frost is the worst foe of the good hunting man, and we may thank our stars that we have so little of it to spoil sport and keep horses in their stalls. Years ago, I remember, I passed some days with a fine old veteran, the keenest man to hounds I ever saw. We had good sport over a good country. On the morning of my departure I was surprised by my host with the request that as soon as I got back to London I should buy for him and send to him a pair of skates. "What kind?" I asked.

"Oh, any kind; I don't care what they're like, so long as they're skates."

"But I didn't know you skated."

"I don't—but the weather looks like turning to frost. I've tried every sort of dodge, and I've found that the only way to keep off frost is to buy a pair of skates. I've got thirty or forty pairs of 'em in the lumber-room at the top of the house."

If my memory serves me, on this occasion the fates were perverse. The old gentleman got his skates in due course, but he also got a very severe frost, which didn't in the least diminish his faith in the efficacy of his dodge when another year came round.

DARBY JONES ON THE CITY AND SUBURBAN.

HONOURED SIR,—When this afternoon I saw a Chestnut Tree in all the Glory of Verdant Leaf I warbled to Myself, "The Spring has come, the City and Suburban is at hand." Now what Affinity there was between the Epsom contest and that Harbinger of bud and blossom, I cannot pretend to determine. Perhaps the foliage pointed in some inscrutable Way to the Victory of a Chestnut Quadruped over those Downs which are now as ever free.

I have, honoured Sir, been a constant Patron of this Meeting, but no one Assembly is more impressed on the tablets of my memory than that of 1882, when Lord ROSMORE's *Passaic* annexed the Stake at the remunerative price of 40 to 1. This Event was remarkable to me because, on that occasion, I noted his lordship's brother, the Honble. PETER WESTENRA, returning to the Metropolis in a four-wheeled cab, whereof the windows were plastered with Five-pound Notes, in order, as the Hon. P. explained, "Just to show what an Irish gentleman could do." I regret to say that I had no reason for joining in the Hon. Nobleman's enthusiasm.

This year we of the Prophetic Vein have a difficult task before us. You, Sir, sitting in your Damask Arm Chair little know the Tortures which a Vates has to endure. Dig and delve as we may in the Field of Divination, we very likely in the end break our Augural Spade on the Flints of Disappointment. However, as the 'Bus Driver hath it, "Here goes."

The 'Alfred looks splendid in print,
But I like the Southern Sid better,
Mantolini is good for a sprint,
And Charles Wyndham may be an upsetter,
But the Gay Nonconformist should win,
And the Soundmaid has got a good chance,
While Upper Thames gets a look in,
If only The Spec leads the dance.

Such, Honoured Sir, is my Prognostication. Trusting to see you and your Aristocratic Friends as usual on your Well-appointed Coach supplied with the *Esse* and *Posse* of Conviviality, I am
Your Devoted Henchman and Heeler, DARBY JONES.

A STEEPLE-CHASE RIDER'S DIARY.

Tuesday.—Due at Mudbury Steeple-chases. Am riding in two races there.

Wednesday.—In first race of yesterday horse ran against post; hurt knee-cap, lost whip, broke stirrup-leather, but

fence on the course. Four other horses jumped on, or over, me. Nett result, two ribs fractured, silk jacket cut off my back, and little finger smashed. Annoying, this, as am unable to ride in last race of afternoon.

Friday.—Hurrah! found very smart



Muriel. "Oh, MAJOR HAWDY, WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY GRAND-MOTHER!"

The Major. "Oh, CERTAINLY, BY ALL MEANS. BUT—AH—I TRUST THE OLD LADY DOESN'T EXPECT ME TO SPEAK TO HER THROUGH THE TELEPHONE—EH, WHAT?"

finally won by a length. Not so lucky in next race. Was leading, when horse blundered, smashed guard-rail and turned tail over head into next field. Sprained wrist, broke bridge of nose, and was rather badly shaken. However, nothing to really hurt. Have to get down into Thrustershire to-night, as I am to ride in three races there to-morrow.

Thursday.—Got second in opening race, after being "cannoned" over last fence, and my mount knocked on to his knees and nose. Bad luck in next race, as riderless horse galloped right across my mount just as he "took off" at biggest

doctor, who has patched me up splendidly and bandaged ribs so well that I can hardly breathe. Shall ride in Grand Annual to-day, and think, with a bit of luck, that I shall win.

A week later.—Where am I? Ah, I see—in bed. How long is it since—? Oh, a week; is it really? And what's happened, what have I—? Oh, concussion of brain, collar-bone, and right arm broken and some ribs dislocated—is that all? Very vexing that, whilst I have been insensible, the Grand National has been run. Where did my horse finish in it? Oh, broke his neck, eh? H'm, that's bad

luck. And his jockey? Oh, still unconscious, eh? Wonder how long it'll be before I can get out, as I *must* be doctored up in time to ride *The Smasher* in the Great Kilham and Krassem Stakes, next month.

PAINFUL POEMS.—N^O. V.

PETER BROWN AND HIS TRAIN OF THOUGHT.

His brain was slightly overwrought
One warm and sunny day,
He fell into a train of thought
Which carried him away.

It was a fairly heavy fall,
And PETER BROWN was dazed;
He could not recollect at all
The scenes on which he gazed.

For swift as thought the train had sped,
Far over sea and land;
The sun was blazing overhead,
The scenery was grand.

But PETER BROWN received a shock!
Before he could divine
What made his Pullman carriage rock,
The train was off the line.

It crumpled up upon its tracks,
He almost broke his neck,
And then a crowd of ugly blacks
Came clamb'ring o'er the wreck.

They tied poor PETER hand and foot,
And bore him to a spot
Where they, alas, were wont to put
Their captives in a pot.

Yes, put them in a pot to boil
For necessary food
With vinegar and salt and oil
(Their cookery was crude).

Oh, who shall tell his horror when
He faced the nigger chief,
All feathers, like a frightened hen,
And black beyond belief?

The blubber lips revealed a flash
Of teeth as white as snow,
And when the teeth began to gnash
Poor PETER wished to go.

But all in vain! A mighty club
The monster heaved on high,
While PETER looked his last on shrub
And tree and earth and sky.

"Farewell," he cried, "each earthly toy,
To earth itself farewell!"

Then paused, and shouted with a joy
That tongue would fail to tell.

Another train of thought appeared!
Resistless in its course,
The brutal black that PETER feared
It crushed without remorse.

And PETER next it bore away,
Through realms of pure delight,
To where Trafalgar's fountains play
Each morning, noon and night.

So PETER BROWN was saved, although
His brain was overwrought;
And cherished with a grateful glow
That second train of thought. F. E.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

Babs the Impossible (HUTCHINSON) is our old friend the girl of *The Heavenly Twins*, with new surroundings and another history. There is not lacking even the faithful, loving brother. But *Montacute Kingconstance*—voilà un nom!—does not play so important a part in the story as did *Babs'* earlier brother. As for *Babs*, she is just the same, frank, boisterous, beautiful, sentimental—in a word, impossible. Men fall suddenly in love with her, and when two propose, at five minutes' notice, she expresses desire to marry them both, one for Sundays, the other for week-days. Marriage, or, to be precise, proposal of marriage, is, indeed, a constant sequence of daily life in the community that people Danehurst. If the men dally, the women hasten to meet them more than half way. Mr. Jellybond Tinney, a barman retired with a fortune, literally has all the women at his feet, from the aristocratic Mrs. Kingconstance of Dane Court to poor poverty-stricken Miss Spice, who falls in love with him at sight. My Baronite found enclosed in his copy of the novel a booklet containing an "interview" with Mrs. SARAH GRAND, explaining her purpose in writing. He did not do the gifted lady the injustice of reading the conversation, fearing lest it should close the novel to him. A story that needs explaining is not, as a rule, worth following. Glancing over the "interview," he gathered that Mrs. GRAND is of opinion that women are left too much to their own resources, whilst their husbands go gadding about in a gay but wicked world. That is a matter of personal, consequently varied, experience. Certainly the influence of the scarcity of the society of men at Danehurst was not wholesome. Mrs. Kingconstance comes as near the mere animal state as is possible to a well-educated well-bred woman. Mr. Jellybond Tinney is as impossible as *Babs*, and more amusing. When the book reaches—er—a second edition, Mrs.—er—GRAND will do well—er—to cut out this sort of—er—thing from the conversation. It is bad enough to have one of the characters stuttering in meaningless manner. Mrs. GRAND is so enamoured of the humour of it that she sets two or three of her puppets at it.

Mr. H. B. IRVING has chosen a nice lively subject for publication (by Mr. HEINEMANN) in this sweet spring time, and has given to a merry world his carefully and somewhat cynically written *Studies of French Criminals*. The Baron dipped into some of the stories of these notorious scoundrels, male and female, and sincerely wished that Mr. H. B. IRVING had been satisfied with using these materials for a Harrison-Ainsworth-y Romance such as *Rookwood*, of which that ruffianly highwayman DICK TURPIN was the hero, though on calm consideration it is better to represent crime and criminals just as they are than to paint them in the bright colouring of an utterly false sentiment. The only question is, why not leave ill alone? Why not leave them at rest in the French Newgate Calendar? For one thing, Mr. H. B. IRVING, who essayed the white-washing of Judge JEFFREYS, deserves our gratitude, and that is, he has not attempted to represent black as white, and all his villains are of the very deepest dye.

THE BARON DE B.-W.

SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND NEAR PEKIN.

The Chancellor of the Chinese Exchequer presents his compliments to the representatives of the European Powers, and begs to acknowledge the claims that they submitted to him on behalf of their respective Governments.

The Chancellor of the Chinese Exchequer is glad to be able to say that his Government will find no greater difficulty in paying sixty millions than a tenth of that amount.

The Chancellor of the Chinese Exchequer sends his hearty greeting, and begs to apologise for the absence of a postage stamp on the envelope to this communication. The omission was inevitable owing to the force majeure of financial consideration.

THE NEW RENAISSANCE.

By A. C.

IV.

It is time that I came to the Central Idea of the renaissance. Personally, I was opposed to the policy of having a Central Idea; it seemed to me a trifle bourgeois, but MORIARTY said that all the best renaissances did have them, and the general feeling in the Club seemed to be that we couldn't get on without one. So we drew lots, out of a hat, for the honour of making first suggestion. Number one was drawn by Professor SKILLING (author of *Fungus Growths*) and we knew that an interesting half-hour lay before us. The Professor is so original.

He said that he believed we were all palpitating with the same spirit; the only difficulty was to give it verbal expression. We few, we happy few, were destined to bring in a new era in art, in literature, and in morals. We didn't mind (he believed he expressed the feeling of the majority) what sort of an era it was, provided that it was really and truly new. ("Hear, hear!") Now, most of the epochs in art were marked by a change in the conception of the Beautiful. We should go deeper than that. We should abolish the Beautiful as an artistic ideal altogether. (Slight sensation.) This might seem startling, but he was sure that it expressed our true feeling. Beauty had had its day, was played out; we were gradually awakening to the discovery of the pre-eminent æsthetic value of ugliness. (Murmurs of approbation.) Hitherto even our most advanced spirits had only ventured to name the Ugly as a sub-species of the Beautiful, but surely the view of his German friend Herr von KRAUTZMANN, was the truer—that Beauty was merely a particular and inferior kind of Ugliness. If only we were true to this ideal a vast field lay open to us, almost untouched as yet. In the drama there had been little accomplished. Scandinavia was diffidently, and perhaps unconsciously, pointing the way; but in our own country we had got no farther than the production of plays that were repulsive, and he hoped that none of us were in such blindness as to confound the repulsive with the truly Ugly. In music, again, despite the open-air efforts of certain countrymen of his friend Herr von KRAUTZMANN, little or nothing had been accomplished. For those of us who worked with brush or pencil there might perhaps be a smoother path. There were not lacking indications that the illustrated papers would give us a hand, and any really sound work was sure to find a place in the Royal Academy. But from all quarters we must be prepared to meet with opposition and even derision. We should have the name of paradox-mongers thrown in our teeth; we should even be called decadents by those who failed to distinguish between the prismatic hues of putridity and the brilliant colours of unfolding life. But we must persevere. And, finally, if we would preach Ugliness, let us be ugly. In our characters, he meant. So far as personal appearance went, it was too late for some of us to succeed. He was aware—painfully aware—that he, himself, was not a really ugly man. (Cries of "Question!") No, no, that was sheer flattery. He disliked flattery—particularly on this point—and he begged us, if we wished to remain his friends, not to employ it. Some people had told him that with a little making-up he would do; but it had always seemed to him the worst of affectations for a man to use artificial means to enhance his own ugliness. But inward ugliness of the soul was within the reach of all, and he trusted that no member of this Club, at all events, would find any difficulty in attaining it. The Professor sat down amid a tempest of applause.

His idea had quite carried us away. After the meeting was over and I was about to depart, I heard agonized groans from the cloak-room. Going in, I discovered that they proceeded from WIMPLETT, the best-looking man in the Club. He was standing before a looking-glass, with the marks of despair printed clearly enough on his handsome face. Over and over again, he murmured the words, "Too late, too late!" It was a pathetic

scene—WIMPLETT's life tragedy. I slipped out noiselessly and went home.

V.

THE Chairman had impressed upon us very carefully, that although we were to be a subtle, insidious, permeating influence, entirely devoid of vulgar ostentation, yet we were never to shrink, if the occasion demanded it, from openly asserting our gospel of Ugliness. Silent action was a noble thing, but much might also be done by the spoken word. We were somewhat surprised, when, at the next meeting of the Committee, the Chairman turned up with a bandage over his right eye. "Gentlemen," he began, almost as soon as he entered the room, "I am now in a position to confirm what I said last time about the spoken word. Much may be done by it—much." We pressed sympathetically for details, and after some attempts at evasion, the Chairman gave them. "Gentle-

men," he said, "there is a certain bishop of my acquaintance, whose name I refrain from mentioning although you can probably guess it. I have known him for years, but never until lately have I appreciated sufficiently his æsthetical value. Gentlemen, he is the ugliest man in England, perhaps in Europe." (We knew now of whom he was speaking, and cast meaning glances at one another.) "He is blessed with a wife and six children, all of equal personal attractions, and yet he has never appeared a really happy man. Now, thought I, if only he were to embrace our renaissance doctrines, what a difference it would make to him! Gentlemen, I went to that bishop: I got into pleasant conversation with him: I led the talk towards Art. Gradually I began to unfold to him the elements of the truth. He seemed hardly to comprehend, so I stated at

some length and with much lucidity the doctrine of Ugliness for Ugliness' sake. Finally, gentlemen, carried away by my theme, I burst into a fervent personal appeal. 'Embrace our faith,' I said, 'and life will become a different thing to you. Only realise the æsthetical supremacy of Ugliness, and every time you glance at these noble portraits of your ancestors you will feel a thrill of the purest joy: every time you gaze upon the faces of your little ones you will experience an artistic treat: every time you look in the mirror you will have a feast of æsthetic delight!' Could I have put it more clearly, gentlemen?" Certainly he could not. "And yet the bishop did not understand. 'Young man,' he said, 'there are two ways out of this room: the door and the window. I recommend the door.' I had feared already that the sudden access of light was merely dazzling his mental vision. Now he appeared to be growing unintelligible, so I felt it both kinder and wiser to withdraw." Here the Chairman abruptly sat down. There were various cries of "What about that bandage?" "Did the bishop do it?" "Gentlemen," said the Chairman without rising, "I had wished to draw a veil over the bandage. The incidents which gave rise to it were not to the credit of my friend the bishop. If you must know, however, there was a slight interlude between my determination to leave the bishop and my actual accomplishment of that purpose. As I said before, much may be done by the spoken word. But let me advise you, gentle-

men, to find out, before you speak it, whether the other man is a boxer."

Before the meeting closed, MORIARTY caused some sensation by getting up to propose a vote of thanks to the bishop. On his reasons being demanded, he said that, at all events, the gentleman in question had, according to renaissance principles, infinitely improved the personal appearance of our Chairman. Considering the graceful nature of the compliment, and the fact that it came from MORIARTY, who is in some sense a rival of his, I thought the Chairman might have seemed more pleased.

VI.

"ALL really good renaissances," said MORIARTY—MORIARTY had a way of talking about renaissances as if he had spent his life amongst them: sometimes one could hardly help suspecting that he kept half-a-dozen or so in his back-yard—"all really

good renaissances have a leading spirit. How about ours?" The question was a momentous one, and the Club went into committee about it at once. After some preliminary discussion it was decided to ballot for the leadership. This, in spite of violent protest from SMALLEY, who thought that nothing but time and the public verdict could possibly decide such a question. SMALLEY knew that he wouldn't have a chance in the ballot. We none of us liked SMALLEY. He proved so obstreperous now that at last the Chairman was obliged to ask MORIARTY to sit on him, which MORIARTY did effectually. As soon as the muffled cries had ceased, we proceeded to ballot. The result was unfortunately indecisive. "Gentlemen," said the Chairman, "I find in the hat, twenty-three slips of paper, bearing twenty-three different names—invaluable as a collec-

tion of autographs, but as a poll—unsatisfactory. Perhaps, before balloting again, we had better clear the ground by a little discussion on general lines." So we discussed. Professor SKILLIBEG, M.A.Oxon., gave it as his view that the ideal leader should be an experienced, middle-aged man, who combined philosophical with artistic attainments, and could further the movement in one of our great educational centres. WIMPLETT, the playwright, held that for bringing ideas before the public there was nothing like the stage: the Twentieth Century Renaissance would most naturally crystallise round a second SHAKESPEARE. And so on. I, myself, thought that, considering the enormous influence of the daily and weekly press, a writer of short articles would have most chance of reaching the minds of the people. The discussion appeared likely to end as the ballot had done, when MORIARTY, without removing his fourteen-stone avoirdupois from its resting-place above the refractory member, spoke winged words. "It strikes me," he said, "that we are altogether on the wrong tack. We should not choose one of ourselves, or, at all events, not one now living. It would give much more freedom to the public imagination if we were to set up as our idol and leader some rare genius who had departed this world with his life-work unfinished, and had bequeathed to us the carrying out of his great ideas."

"Good!" cried several members.

"Whom do you propose?" cried others.



THE RECOVERED GAINSBOROUGH.

There was silence for a few moments. Then said WIMPLETT, "How about SMALLEY?"

MORIARTY rose to his feet and disclosed SMALLEY lying very flat and still in the bottom of the arm-chair.

"He died young," said MORIARTY, regarding the body with a pensive shake of the head. We rose involuntarily from our seats, as he went on with a gentle eloquence inspired by the deep emotion of the moment. "He died young; in his prime, or even before it; with the larger part of his unique genius still undeveloped. He left few works, and those few are of value rather as a magnificent promise than as actual achievements. It is in the lives and works of his small but admiring circle of friends that we must look for his life and work. If ever he was ambitious to become the leader of the New Movement, that ambition is richly and abundantly realised. His bodily presence is no longer with us, but his spirit is the spirit of the Twentieth Century."

It was a fine tableau, suggestive of ANTONY and JULIUS CÆSAR. A murmur of intense emotion ran round the room. And then—nobody can quite tell how it happened—we found STARK, the ejected member of the Club, standing in our midst. He had a dangerous, unpleasant look. We were so much disgusted by his intrusion, that nobody stirred or spoke; and a minute later he was driving off with the body of our Leader in a hansom cab.

VII.

At first it seemed as if, for once, SMALLEY had done a really smart thing. His decease provided our movement with an ideal Leading Spirit. It is always an advantage to have your leading spirit (a) young, and (b) dead. Then he will never embarrass you by doing anything; he will never lose romance by growing fat; and he can be venerated at a smaller sacrifice of self-respect, the halo seeming more natural when the top-hat has been finally discarded.

In SMALLEY's case there were exceptional advantages; for he had left no finished works to speak of, so that we could safely attribute to him any ideas that came into our heads, just as PLATO did with poor old SOCRATES after the hemlock episode. (And one would like to be assured, by the bye, that PLATO himself didn't have a hand in the brewing of that hemlock!)

But, alas! that we should ever have trusted such a man. He and STARK between them broke up the Club. MCCASKILL's memoir of SMALLEY had just been published and had created an enormous sensation, and we were holding a most successful banquet, at which all the men of light and leading in art and literature were present, when the dastardly blow was dealt. MORIARTY was on his feet, holding the well-dined company entranced with an exposition of our Leader's ideas on art.

"We feebly endeavour," he said, "to follow in his footsteps. Would that he himself were here to guide us!" And then the door opened, and in walked STARK and SMALLEY, arm-in-arm! I shall not attempt to describe the sensation. It was horrible. SMALLEY took a horrid big pipe out of his mouth, nodded and grinned diabolically.

"Glad to see you fellers again," he said. "I see by your bright faces how you've been sorrowing for me. Daresay you didn't know that I suffer from trances; have done ever since I was a boy. But I'm all right again, now. Come! this is jolly."

We had always known that SMALLEY was not a gentleman; but no one had ever suspected him of possessing such a shifty, uncertain character. We sat and stared in silence whilst he helped himself to port. Our guests showed their delicacy by dropping quietly out of the room one by one. When they were all gone, STARK, who had been grinning from behind MCCASKILL's chair, turned to SMALLEY.

"Come, old man. We must be going." As they reached the door, he looked over his shoulder. "I knew you'd all be pleasantly surprised. Such a relief to MORIARTY in particular! But I'm sorry the Club's closing."

The next morning I received an urgent call to the United States. On my way to the station, I passed the Club. The shutters were up, and there was a piece of paper fastened by four drawing-pins on the door just below the knocker. I mounted the steps to examine it. Upon it was printed, in bold characters, the announcement:—

"THERE WILL BE NO RENAISSANCE NEXT CENTURY.

By order, J. SMALLEY."

But BRODIE still keeps the accounts. He keeps them so well that nobody knows where they are; nor where he is.

RAMSGATE AND TRAMGATE.

SIR,—Your own Holiday Tour Commissioner has returned from his Kent Coast mission, and in a general way reports "All's well." He wishes to remark on a paragraph that recently appeared in your paper, under date April 10, as to a certain "Tramgirt Island." Sir, that island—if that island be, as your Commissioner takes it to be, the Isle of Thanet, then permit him to inform you that at present it is *not* tram-girt, and very far from being so. But that they are on the Trampage between Margate or Cargate, Ramsgate or Tramgate, and Switchington or Birchington, "there ain't," as our dear old Mrs. GAMP would have said, "no denying of it, BETSY!"

But in spite of bad tobacco and all the savoury scents and smells that accompany the partially washed to their favourite holiday resorts at certain brief seasons of the year, the splendid air of Thanet, north and south, remains the same salubrious health-giving, refreshing, invigorating tonic that has always been its peculiar characteristic. 'Arries and 'Arriets, *et hoc genus omne*, may patronise these trams, if they find it is advantageous to them so to do, in passing from Cargate to Tramgate, and *vice versa*, and so it may eventuate that the cars, the four-in-hands, the vans, waggonettes, and other vehicles that "kick up a dust" and ply for hire, "wet or shine," may suffer, but not the line, neither the L. C. & D. nor the S. E. R., doing the same distance in about a fourth of the time, and, as your Commissioner believes, charging rather less, or, at all events, not more than the rushing, crawling, curving, slowing, speeding, stopping, ascending, descending tram. "There's air!" is the cry at Ramsgate, even though the place be temporarily converted into "Tramgate," and it is not to be dispelled by this Yellow Monster (for such is the nice restful colour of these tramcars, whose shape is certainly ungainly) that is not yet under perfect control, and not inclined to invariably obey the guidance of the conductor, conduct he never so wisely. There are more St. Georges than one in Thanet, land possessors, who oppose the advance of the Tram Dragon (quite a Snap-dragon in the way of collaring and swallowing up the land left and right), and who, champions of right against might, are regarded by some of the very advanced school much as the civilised westerns were wont to look upon the Celestials who opposed the incursion of the Locomotive into the Lotus-Land of the Yellow Peril and China-Blue Puzzle.

The railways at all events may safely sing "We fear no foe," and those who love the Island of Rest (with exceptions of Bank Holiday unrest), may safely seek their old sea-side resorts un-tram-melled, and sing, not only "Begone, dull care," but also, to the same old tune,

"Begone, bright car;
I prithee begone without me!
From Ramsgate to Mar—
gate travel by L.C. & D!"

and so forth, *ad lib.*, each to his own particular fancy, and the same grand Kent Coast Air for all singers, says

YOUR OWN HOLIDAY COMMISSIONER.

EVIDENTLY BY AN OLD WHIST-PLAYER WHO "HATES YOUR NEW FANGLE'D GAMES."—The modern "Pons Asinorum"—Bridge.